Shri Arjun Singh, Minister of Human Resource Development

Shri Shivraj V. Patil, Minister of Home Affairs

Shri S. Jaipal Reddy, Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Culture and

Shri Sunil Dutt, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports (Since deceased)

Observation of UNESCO on World Heritage Sites

2666. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that any delegation of UNESCO has recently visited to examine the three World Heritage Sites in Agra-Taj, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri, Hampi in Karnataka and Bodhgaya in Bihar;

(b) if so, their observations on these World Heritage Sites and Government's raction thereto;

(c) whether Government have requested to add more sites/places in the list of World Heritage Sites; and

(d) if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) The UNESCO/ICOMOS Missions recently visited the Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhgaya (Bihar) in April, 2005 and Hampi (Karnataka) in August, 2005 in connection with finalization of Site Management Plans.

In case of Bodhgaya, the Mission has recommended that the work on Site Management Plan may be suspended until such time all necessary conditions for implementation of the same are in place; namely appropriate legal framework, controls in the buffer zone, management mechanism, etc. The Mission also recommended to explore the possibility of a long term extension of the Mahabodhi Temple Complex inscription to include the cultural landscape identified with Lord Buddha and other properties associated with the life of Buddha in India like, for example, Sarnath. Mahabodhi Temple at Bodhgaya is not a centrally protected monument. It is managed and

maintained by the Government of Bihar through the Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee constituted under Bodhgaya Temple Act, 1949.

In case of Hampi, discussions were held with officials of Government of Karnataka, ASI and other stakeholders and it was decided to formulate an operational management plan to strengthen the functioning of the Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority at Hampi. The suggestion of UNESCO mission to establish a technical unit is receiving the attention of the Government of Karnataka.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Government of India has nominated Majuli Island in Assam for consideration of inclusion in the World Heritage List in the year 2006. Besides, the Government would also be resubmitting the nomination dossiers of Red Fort.

Impact of pollution and earthquake on heritage symbol

2667. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the European Union has selected Delhi's towering heritage symbol-Qutub Minar—as the Indian site to carry out seismic resistance tests;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the European Union has also been monitoring the impact of pollution and earthquake on some other heritage symbols in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether they have sought Government's permission for such monitoring and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The European Union in collaboration with Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee, under a research project funded by the EU-lndia Economic Cross Cultural Programme, has selected Qutub Minar for improving its seismic resistance. They, have proposed to perform non-destructive tests and install dynamic monitoring equipment at Qutub Minar in the next month.